# WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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## CLOSE OF VOLUME II.

This number closes a second volume of this magazine, and furnishes a fit occasion for some plain words with our readers about it. They will wish to know whether it has been a success, whether it is to be continued, and, if so, what are its aims for the future.

We began this work with the firm conviction that we had been put in trust with a larger message of the gospel than the church had generally received We were led to see that it was glad tidings to all people in that it conveyed assurance that the life which had been forfeited for all had been redeemed for all, and that, although the death-sentence must be carried out, and the life surrendered and full punishment for sin meted out, beyond this work of judgment God has provided to raise even the unjust to another opportunity of life. This gospel we have endeavored to speak not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. We have sought on the one hand to present it in its scriptural fullness, and on the other, to guard all that scripture teaches concerning future punishment, and even eternal punishment, from dangerous neglect by those who are ready to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and to continue in sin that grace may abound.

It was manifest from the outset that a doctrine which impinged at many points against accepted beliefs, and for the reception of which no room had

been left in the institutional forms in which men have compacted the Christian faith, must make its way slowly. And yet, as the full gospel, it must first be received before either the true doctrine of the church can be seen, or its unity of faith and organism for which Jesus prayed be attained. In striving to make known this full gospel, which, besides its special salvation for them that believe, brings to all men the hope of redemption from the death brought upon all, we have been working towards an end most dear to us,—the ultimate unity and perfection of the church. We must have more agreement about the goal towards which we are all tending before we can all be one.

This magazine has had therefore to create for itself a new constituency. It found none ready to hand. There was no party in the church holding its views upon which it could rely for support. It started indeed with a number of subscribers who believed, as do we, that the coming of the Lord is the true hope of the church. But it has alienated some of these from its support because it has failed to feed what we believe to be an unhealthy appetite for the sensational aspects of this great theme, and has spoken to them freely about the common mistake of its advocates in so looking for the coming Christ as to overlook the present Christ. Again, at the outset of our work we made it plain that we are no believers in the accepted view of the inherent immortality of man. We could have found a constituency ready to welcome us if we would cast our lot with that growing company of Christians who are partisans of that

view. But most of them seem equally blind, with their more orthodox brethren, to any gracious purpose of God in providing a universal ransom of mankind from death. For whether these countless masses are raised to be cast again into an eternal hell, or to be punished by annihilating judgments, either end is unworthy of the grace which has provided a ransom for all, and turns what was meant to be a great blessing into an unspeakable disaster. We could not turn aside therefore to seek partisan support from those with whom we agreed in the foundation truth that there is no eternal life for man except as he is grafted by faith into the stock of that new and immortal manhood of which Christ is the first fruits. Since we began to prepare this article there comes to us a notice from a subscriber of this class to discontinue because our view that the soul—which we believe to be destructible—survives the body in death "involves the errors and absurdities of immortal-soulism."

And so in the contest we have made in our own denomination for the revision of its worn out and discarded formulas which teach that wicked men are raised to be judged and cast again into hell "to be punished with unspeakable torments of body and soul with the devil and his angels in hellfire forever,"—while many have felt the force of our plea for perfect honesty and candor in the church's dealing with these tremendous themes, and for that posture of mind in reference to them which is open to any new light which God may throw upon them in these last days, yet few are willing to avow this, or identify them-

selves with any movement against the standards, which they acknowledge must sooner or later be made, for fear of ulterior results, or to avoid bringing themselves under suspicion. Many of this class read what we have written with interest and even approval, but give it no support. And so with regard to the much-mooted question of church unity, few are yet prepared to take the radical ground we occupy that no fragment of the church *can* contain or arrive at the truth in its perfectness, that our first duty therefore is to confess the common shame and weakness of this divided state and to get these dissevered members back into such relation to the Head that His life shall knit them together into one body, so that it may become a fit vehicle of His grace and power. And even our views of the larger hope for the world contained in the gospel, which some might expect would give us popularity, are so diverse from those bruited in the "New Theology," and protest so strongly against its probationary intermediate state and deferred judgment, that its adherents do not come to our support.

We state these things, not at all in the way of complaint, but as informing our readers of the discouragements with which we have to contend in such an enterprise. And yet these are the very features which can alone give it success before God. We must be faithful to the truth, as He makes it known to us, at every cost. Slowly, we believe, this magazine is doing His work. It is all the time winning here and there a reader who has become interested in the truths set forth. It has had a much wider

circle of readers than its subscription list indicates. We have sent it gratuitously to many Theological Professors and other leaders of Christian thought, and we have had repeated evidence that they have not cast it aside as rubbish for the waste-basket. Several of these have written to us about it. Others have spoken. We believe that we are sowing seed for a harvest of future blessing to the church. In the general decay of the old creed-doctrine of eternal torment we have conserved the true scriptural doctrine of future punishment, at the same time we have satisfied the instincts of the enlightened Christian heart by giving it scripture warrant for its better views of God and of His gracious purposes toward mankind. We have brought out the true doctrine of the church as His chosen seed for the execution of these purposes. We have pointed out the true paths along which she must find her way back to unity, and to preparedness to fulfill this high and holy mission. We have sought to discover the special aspects of truth which God has been making known to diverse sections of the church and to special schools of thought, and to find for them their place in that perfect unity of the faith toward which He is conducting the whole body, notwithstanding the obstacles which human creeds and systems have put in the way. And so have we endeavored to speak the "Words of reconciliation" committed unto us. Whatever has been prompted by Him and done for Him He will in the end honor. Whatever has been done in a merely human and selfish way we are content that He should dishonor.

Notwithstanding, then, the sacrifices which a continuance of this work requires, we do not feel at liberty to abandon it. And we shall conduct it, as God gives opportunity and strength, along those lines of thought which shall seem to us to best promote the welfare of the one church of the one Lord. As we have given ample testimony to the views drawn from Scripture upon retribution and the redemptive character of resurrection, we do not propose to allow these special topics so much to crowd out other themes in which we have equal interest. A valued brother has just written to us a long letter urging this upon us, and it accords with our own previous inclinations. Although not in accord with our views upon retribution, he expresses himself in strong terms of the great importance of other lines of testimony we have started in these pages, and of the need of the church that some one should bring before it just these truths. Among these he specifies: (1) "The necessity for the humiliation of the whole church on account of its divisions and discords, its schisms and sectarian strifes. I can conceive of no nobler field of testimony than that, and no higher aspiration for a Christian witness in a journal like yours."

(2) "Again I think you have struck another new and vastly important line of truth in pointing out the attitude which the people of God must be in before the Lord's coming can take place, as discussed in the article 'What Hinders the Lord's Coming.' I believe that touches the *root* of the matter, and if you follow up that theme in all its ramifications and practical applications we should hear less of the theory of the second advent and know more of its power."

(3) "You have done good service also by showing the

error of believers in supposing that they have nought to do with the law of God. This is one of the deepest and deadliest and most universal errors in all the Protestant churches. Any Christian minister's life time would be well spent if devoted only to correcting this error."

(4) "I sympathize with you in your desire to save the truth from an appearance of excessive hardness which many preachers and teachers seem to give it. They need to be instructed how to rightly *divide* theword of truth."

(5) "Once more, I think you have done well in showing the large promise of God for the world's blessing in the coming age. Of this nine-tenths of the church have no knowledge or thought. And this lack is the fruitful parent of many misconceptions which lead to bigotry and narrow-heartedness and a fatal conceit among the churches."

These extracts will serve to show how wide is the field open before us in many directions, and how important it is that we should seek to hold the ground we have gained.

A word now to our delinquent subscribers. Some of these have been receiving this periodical for a year or more with no offer of payment and no notice that they desire us to discontinue it. Without such notice they are legally and morally bound to pay for what they receive. Now and then, some one, after receiving it part of the year, returns a copy. Such ought to know that this is no proper notice nor discharge of previous obligation. If any are too poor to pay, we will be glad to send the magazine freely to any such of the Lord's servants who express the desire for it. But such persons must inform us to that effect. We do not propose to enforce our just claims

in any case. If anyone chooses to neglect them, we can better bear the loss than can he the wrong of such refusal. But the names of all delinquents of a year's standing we shall erase. These remarks do not of course apply to those to whom, of our own motion, the magazine has been sent. We wish this class to understand that we have no thought of putting any one under obligations for that which they did not order.

A few words also to our friends. We are happy to know that we have some such among our subscribers. And their number is increasing. We ask whether you may not have some responsibility to help in this work beyond the sending of your own subscriptions. Can you not bring the magazine to the attention of others? We know that the circle of those who are prepared to appreciate its discussions is small. But we all might do something to enlarge it. If these things to which we testify are true it is important that they should be much more widely known in the church. Some of you can help us circulate them. We need your personal influence, your prayers. We can also use your gifts in distributing them over a wider area than we are ourselves able to supply. These, however, we do not ask unless you believe that the Master calls upon you to serve Him in that way. Whether our field shall be wide or restricted we desire to leave with Him. We could well wish that He would raise up some abler and more worthy exponent of these truths to occupy this field. But until then, we have no alternative but to go forward for another year.

# STUDIES IN THE BIBLE.

## REVIEW.

We have endeavored thus faithfully to trace the doctrine of retribution for sin, as it is unfolded in the Scriptures, and to place it side-by-side with that other great feature of the divine administration, the purpose of redemption. And we have done this in the interest of the many sad and earnest souls who fervently believe the Bible to be the Word of God, and who yet are painfully oppressed in receiving its teachings about retribution because they have failed to see how these are balanced and explained by the other side of the divine dealings in redemption.

And yet these two sides are presented to us at the very outset of revelation On the one side Adam is sentenced to what appears to be a hopeless doom. He was to die and to return to dust. No intimation is given in the sentence that this destruction was not to be final. And yet a gleam of hope is afterwards given in the promise of a conquering Seed who should bruise the serpent's head. Later on, Abraham is called to become the father of the promised seed. And it is repeatedly declared that in him and in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.

We began these inquiries with the conviction that God's promises cannot mean less than they convey, and that when He says "all" He means all. Hitherto the church seems to have found no middle ground between a crude universalism, which both reason and

Scripture condemn, and the hopeless damnation of that immense proportion of mankind who have died in their sins. It has therefore been compelled to divest the future resurrectiou of this class of every element of hope. It has thus failed to recognize one of the most vital and fundamental features in God's unfolding plan, viz., that resurrection, as a recovery of man out of that death-state into which sin has cast him, is *essentially* redemptive. She has therefore failed to see that this provision to restore all men to another life is His way of making good His original promise to bless all mankind. This does not imply that all shall at last attain eternal life and blessedness. But it does mean that this is not His final administration of grace toward lost men. It means that death cannot defeat His purpose to bless all generations, but that He will bring from the land of the enemy, and within the sphere of His economy of grace and power, those whom it has not here reached, and whom His just judgments have for their sins consigned to death and hell.

These two principles, that His retributions for sin are fixed and inevitable, but that death, sin's wages, cannot snatch His creatures out of His hands nor defeat His purposes, we have traced through the Scriptures. We have found that He is the God of the dead, as well as of the living, and that all His great promises of blessing pre-suppose, and require for their fulfilment, the resurrection of the dead.

Beginning with that profound passage, the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii), we found that it was built up around these two principles, and that they furnish

the key to the "secret things" stored up among its treasures. God's providential dealings with the world of mankind, and especially with His chosen people, are there brought to view. The claims of His righteousness, which require that they, and that all nations, be adjudged to calamities and to death for their sins, are impressively set forth. The fire of His anger must burn against them to the lowest hell (vs. 22). And yet He asserts His power over all the enemies who had brought them into this sad plight, and even over death. He who kills can make alive. And He who gave such fearful power to "the enemy and the avenger" must revenge Himself even against him, and bring in a salvation in which all nations should rejoice with His people. And that the "all nations" signified are not merely the nations of some future millenial period, but the nations also who had suffered these visitations of His anger, and gone down to captlvity in death, is implied in the whole tenor of the passage. This is the very hidden truth it contains, the precious secret sealed up among its treasures (vs. 34) that, although God must allow the adversary to people his realms with prisoners, and death to lead down to hell its multitude of captives, yet even these enemies should be compelled to give back their trophies, and be consumed in the wrathful fires themselves had kindled.

These twin facts of judgment and redemption are illustrated in all Old Testament history. They are amplified in all subsequent psalm and prophecy. All intelligent readers of the Bible confess this. But all do not see that these principles overleap the bounds of

death and govern God's administrations in the ages to come. And few see that this must necessarily be so. For otherwise His great promises must be miserably diminished and His purposes thwarted. And few see that His purpose in saving a chosen seed in this age has relation to His wider purpose to bless "all the nations of the earth" in an age to come. But with this key in hand, and with the firm conviction that death cannot defeat God nor annul the least of His promises, we have been enabled to find in the Old Testament abundant hints and suggestions and direct declarations of His purpose to bring future blessing to all mankind through their resurrection from the dead.

We have seen, on the one hand, that the Bible throughout reveals a definite penalty for sin Wicked men and nations must go down to sheol. There they are held as captives—prisoners in the pit where no water is. Many Old Testament passages view this prison as a place of silence and of gloom in which the dead lie either in an unconscious state, or at best in "the miserable consciousness of not being." It is only in the New Testament that Hades is viewed as a place of torment. But this torment seems to be but the accompaniment of that destructive process which goes on there to the destruction of even the soul in hell, until nothing of man is left but a naked spirit in the outer darkness. But many Old Testament allusions to this bondage in death imply that God's pity would not forsake them even here, although driven out to the "outmost parts of heaven" (Deut. xxx. 4). "For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent

Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left" (Deut. xxxii. 36). "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children" (Isa. xlix. 25). An extended examination of the Psalms and Prophets has shown us that the captives so often referred to as the future subjects of delivering mercy are the captives in the realms of death. All minor captivities prefigure this one. Hence these captives are often spoken of as *the children of death* (Ps. lxxix. 11, cii. 20). They are viewed as captives *in the land of the enemy*, whom the Lord should ransom from the hand of one stronger than they (Jer. xxxi. 11, 16). And that unregenerate men are made the subjects of this recovery is plain from the fact that this is the very class in view in all these passages, which speak first of the sins which consigned them to this captivity, and of their subsequent release. In Hosea xiii it is manifestly the apostate Israel, whom the Lord had rejected from being His people, the Ephraim, joined to his idols, of whom He afterwards declares, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave (sheol). I will redeem them from death; O death where are thy plagues? O Sheol where is thy destruction? repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." We have found that restoration from this bondage is promised, in due time and order, to even sinful nations that debauched and oppressed Israel, and who had been destroyed under the heaviest hand of God's judgments,—

to Assyria and Egypt, to Moab and Ammon and Elam, to Samaria and to Sodom (Ezek. xvi). Only a salvation of so wide a scope as this could meet the requirements of such far-reaching and comprehensive prophecies as that, for example, of Isaiah xxv, in which all nations are invited to a feast of fat things prepared for them by the Lord God, who shall destroy from off the face of the earth all that now hides His glory from the nations, and swallow up death in victory.

A wide generalization of Old Testament passages has thus established for us these two principles: 1. The fire of God's anger must burn against all evil-doers to overthrow and consume them in death and hell. 2. This "land of the enemy" where they lie as outcasts in bondage and gloom is not a territory beyond the reach of His conquering arm. He has provided to ransom in due time and order all these prisoners in the pit; and so, over and beyond this region of deserved judgment for sin, to make good His promise of blessing to all the families of the earth.

Coming to the New Testament we began its study with the principle that it cannot at any point contradict the Old. Christ came not to supersede, but to fulfill the law and the prophets. His words therefore were spoken in reference to this Old Testament revelation. They were designed to illumine and unfold it. All His sayings therefore about hell and the wrath to come must be in accordance with the principles we have there discovered. And nothing more is needed to bring them into such harmony than to put all His words about future judgment, and hell, and

unquenchable fire, precisely where they belong,—as relating to what befalls wicked men before resurrection. Such an interpretation of them is so natural and obvious that it is a marvel that the church should have been so long blind to it. A single passage in the most obscure book of the Bible (Rev. xx. 11–15), which speaks of a judgment of the dead after their awakening from death, has been suffered to dominate and pervert the meaning of all the earlier New Testament passages which speak of a speedy judgment for sin, and of a suffering in hell awaiting sinners just beyond the borders of this earthly life. Just where the Old Testament located sheol there must we locate the New Testament hell. They are but the same place of punishment.* The division of this realm of death into a Hades, and a Gehenna widely separated in character and in time, is but a part of the obscuring process above referred to. It was in *Hades* that the rich man lifted up his eyes being in torment. Gehenna is only a deeper pit in that realm of destruction which the Old Testament covers by the broader name of Sheol. Were it not for some of these false notions imported into our New Testament reading, no one would have ever thought that when John the Baptist describes the Messiah's work of judgmeut as a burning up of the chaff with "unquenchable fire" that anything more was meant by that term than its frequent Old Testament usage implies. And when Jesus repeatedly warns men against the danger of hell-fire, and that it

*See upon this point Prof. Shedd's *Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, pg. 22, et seq.

is far better that they should now mortify the sins in their members than lose the whole body and soul in hell, no one would have supposed that he was referring to a future resurrection body, brought up from the grave to be damned, but to the loss of their *present* heritage in life and manhood. What he has all along in view in such passages is an *impending* destruction awaiting sinful men, and from which He sought to rescue all who would receive Him by the gift of an eternal life which would make them even now triumphant over death.

And so His words of judgment, which relate to the trial of living generations of mankind have been treated as if they had primary and sole reference to the masses of the resurrected dead. And this too, in the face of His repeated declarations that they would overtake the world in the same way that the men of Noah's and of Lot's day were surprised, and that they would begin before that generation passed away. No one would deny, of course, that Jesus Christ is exalted to be the Judge of the dead as well as of the living. But it still remains the fact that the nations who know Him not, and who obey not His gospel, and who are consigned by Him to eternal fire (Matt. xxv. 31–46), are the living nations of mankind who pass in review before His throne. The words describe a pre-resurrection scene, and do not attempt to define what may be in the purposes of God for these doomed masses beyond their resurrection. Indeed it must be borne in mind in interpreting all these words of Jesus that He did not intend

to throw the great light of His approaching triumph upon these dark shadows of judgment before it took place. He chose to wait, until after the Son of Man was risen from the dead, before illumining the minds of even His disciples to the meaning of this great event—its relation to all God's great promises in the past, and to His widening purposes of grace toward the world in the future. This explains why it is that the harshest words in the Bible about future punishment are those of the loving Lord and Saviour. The time for the full disclosure of His redeeming plan was not yet. What hope for the world was couched in His resurrection could not yet be made known, except in the way of hints which even His chosen followers did not apprehend. And this explains why, as these studies have made plain to us, our traditional notions of a future hell of fire and threats of everlasting torment, find no place in either the sermons or the epistles of the apostles. In conformity with what we learned of the teachings of the Master, we found that the wrath to come in their view was a fearful punishment awaiting the ungodly in death and before resurrection. The harshest passage in either St. Paul's addresses or letters is that in 2 Thess. i. 9, where he speaks of an eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. But every careful reader of the context, and of these two epistles, will see that this passage applies to a class of sinners living on the earth and who are saying "peace and safety" at the time of the Lord's coming. The resurrected dead

are not brought to view. And so in the Catholic Epistles "the great day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" is one which overtakes men on the earth. There is absolutely nothing therefore in the words of Christ, or in the words He put by the Holy Ghost into the mouth of His apostles, or upon their pens, which sets aside the force of the principles required by the Old Testament teaching that man's judgment and suffering for sin lie in death, and in that land of darkness and bondage into which souls pass beyond it; and nothing to interfere with that great principle outlined there, but brought into clearer light in the New Testament, that this punishment is bounded for all men by a hope of resurrection which shall reach them, each in his own time and order, as the result of the ransom paid for all. Not even the doctrine of retribution as brought to view in the Apocalypse can set aside these principles. Indeed that vision is all in harmony with it. The passages which seem to be exceptional cannot really be so. Their interpretation must yield to the requirements of these great principles which underlie all Scripture, and which are fundamental in the plan of redemption it was written to reveal. This promised recovery of all from the death-state, which is sin's wages, is not the salvation of all to eternal life, but to the blessings and the opportunities of a restored human life. The Bible brings to view two orders of life, of which Adam and Christ are the respective heads. In Christ there is eternal life. Man, in union with Him, becomes partaker of the life of God and the heir of all things.

This life is freed from all bondage to the creature. It is unfettered, glorious and endless. Only the saints are raised in the fashion of this divine manhood. Other men must come forth to a life not yet freed from this bondage, and under the law of change and corruption. Such was the life of Adam at his creation. He was peccable and perishable,—only a *candidate* for the eternal life. As Scripture speaks of only these two orders of manhood, and as wicked men cannot bear the image of the heavenly, they must be raised into the sphere of a natural and earthy manhood. This leaves them still on trial and under judgment. This is "the resurrection of judgement" (Jno. v. 29). And this we believe to be the trial of the dead brought to view in the judgment of the great white throne. The once dead in that scene are not cast into the lake of fire for the sins of this life. They have already been sent to hell for these. That lake can only be for those who fail in their second trial of life, and who are therefore condemned to the second death.

The same principles of the divine dealing in both judgment and redemption are thus seen to pervade all Scripture. All its threatenings of destructive punishment for sin are verified. And room is made for the fulfilment of all its promises without evasion or abatement. The Sheol of the Old Testament and the Gehenna of the New alike await the sinner this side of resurrection. His judgment does not wait until some far-distant assize, nor does His damnation slumber. Hell now yawns beneath him. All Jesus' words about it are rightly understood only as we thus locate them.

Resurrection for unjust men does not mean indeed what it does for the just. We may well suppose that the grade and potency of the restored life will be according to character. "To every seed his own body." But there is nothing in the severest denunciations of Jesus, nor in His most fearful threatenings of wrath, to exclude the idea that beyond this region of judgment there is hope in resurrection. All that is needed to adjust these two sides of truth to one another is to know that what is exposed to this fearful peril is man's *present* endowment and heritage in life—that he may suffer the entire loss of this, and that its destruction is final. And yet the grace of God may again take up his case, as it did that of Adam, by restoring to him another life on another basis, with another opportunity to win the crown of life which seemed lost to him forever. In no other way can the constant assertion of Scripture be made good that blessing of some sort has been procured for *all* the families of the earth through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If this promise does not reach over to the dead, then the greater part of these families have no share in it, and His Messianic work as Lord of both the dead and the living remains unfulfilled.

All this accords too with what we have learned from Scripture and from science of the nature of man. He is an embodied image of God. He was made to have dominion over all His works. He now stands on the summit of created life. The forces that rule in this created system, and which we call forces of nature, but which Scripture views as living powers or

angels, are made tributary to him. Death, the wages of sin, disembodies man and so discrowns and casts him out of his heritage. But man has not only an earthly body, bringing him into relation to the created system. He is a living soul. The breath or spirit of God enters also into the constitution of his being, and forms within him "the spirit of a man." He is therefore body, soul, and spirit. Each one of these elements is necessary to constitute him a man. The soul seems to be an intermediate structure between the material body and the immaterial spirit. And, like the body, it is perishable. Jesus teaches that both body and soul may be destroyed in that pit of the devouring energy of natural forces to which He gives the name of hell-fire. But He also teaches that the soul may survive and suffer there—how long we know not—before the spirit is cast out into the outer darkness. Whether the spirit, after being divested of these elements of manhood, retains the consciousness of its former human personality we do not know. All we know is that it ceases to be a man. A disembodied ghost is not a man. And, therefore, the destruction of such a being out of the life and estate of manhood is complete. The *man* is dead. And this death—state is emphatically the wages of sin. But just here comes in the importance of the doctrine and hope of resurrection. It is the re-investiture of the dead and outcast one with life in manhood. And just here lies the mistake of the old eschatology. It virtually denies any proper *death* of the man before resurrection. And it unspeakably degrades resurrection into an instru-

ment of aggravated retribution and torment. It robs that which is always viewed in Scripture as a "hope" of every element of hope and makes it an unmitigated curse. And here also it comes into conflict with what even Science teaches concerning the progress of life. It teaches that this progress culminates in man. Science is blind indeed to the fact that the goal of this progress is not the earthy but the risen man. But if it could once perceive that man is to take on another form of manhood beyond the grave, it would scorn the idea that this can be for purposes of degradation, and that Nature's grand progress toward perfected life is to be thus turned backward. No, the idea of resurrection for the unjust must be either abandoned, or we must admit that it is even for them another beginning and on a higher scale. For it lies in the very nature of life that it must build itself up into more perfect forms. And if any of its organisms refuse to yield to this law of advance toward perfection, it must refuse to make for itself a home in such. They must be rejected out of the sphere of life forever.* So that while it must be admitted that some may perish out of the line of progress, in a second death, it yet remains true that the harmonies

*A most thoughtful book on this subject is Prof. Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. It is to be regretted that this book, while it sets forth with much ability and wealth of illustration this feature of the divine economy, overlooks so much the redemptive side of God's working, even in the realm of nature. The author should have drawn from this source analogies to prove resurrection, and so have thrown the light of this hope upon the divine plan of the world. The poverty of this feature in its philosophy of human destiny is the great defect of that otherwise useful book.

of both Scripture and of Science require us to believe that resurrection is essentially redemptive and benignant.

This view of resurrection has a far better basis however than Science can furnish. It is inwoven into the whole warp and woof of Scripture. It underlies the divine plan of the world and of man as its heir, as therein revealed. It is necessary to its completion. It is essential to any right knowledge of God. Without it we cannot rightly know His Name, which is Love, nor His Son whom He sent to be the Saviour of the world. Our conceptlon of the very God we worship must be distorted, and our spiritual life, which consists in the knowledge of Him, must be defective. His gospel will be shorn of half its truth and grace. What the world needs, in order to know the Father, and what the Church needs, in this day of its bewilderment concerning man's destiny, and the mystery of hell, is the recovery of the doctrine of a universal resurrection, from the region of despair and unending curse, to the ground upon which St. Paul placed it in his address before Felix, when he declared his "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and of the unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15). Never shall we understand the Scriptures without this key,—that the provision in Christ to make all alive who died in Adam is God's way of making good His primal redemption promise to bless through a chosen seed all the families of the earth.

It will be apparent also to any who have followed us closely through this investigation, that it leaves

the Bible doctrine of present and future punishment for sin unimpaired. In stripping it of the monstrosities with which our dim views of God's plan have clothed it, we have only made it more real. We have brought it nearer to men's consciences and to their apprehension. We have emphasized their present peril. We have called their attention away from a far distant lake of fire to a present hell, on the borders of which they daily tread, and whose fires of destruction are already kindled in their bodies and souls. We have warned them of the hell before resurrection as the penalty for sin in this life, rather than of the lake of fire which awaits the issues of a life to come. We have told them that increasing sin must intensify and prolong for them this hell, that resurrection can reach them only in their own time and order, that it cannot exempt men who continue in sin from future peril, nor exempt them from a second death, and that their lives can be saved from destruction, and purified and made eternal, only as they receive Christ, and so receive power to become the sons of God. The mass of men in Christian lands have generally rejected the old creed doctrine of endless torment. Many of them have rejected the whole system of faith, of which they have been taught to believe this forms a part. Others are being deluded with the fiction that the death-state is not penalty, but extended probation. There is imperative need, therefore, that the true doctrine of immediate punishment, as we have found it presented in Scripture, should be brought out and set before them; that, on the one hand, they may be

deterred from sin by its just and salutary view of the wrath to come and of a Judge standing at the door; and, on the other, may gain a true view of the face of their Father, God, now masked from them by the horrid distortions which men have drawn over it; and a true view also of the work of the Divine Saviour in their behalf, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

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## NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

DEATH OF THE REV. A. A. HODGE, D.D.—We share in the widespread grief which the announcement of Dr. Hodge's death has occasioned. We admired him greatly for his eminent gifts of mind and heart. As our readers are aware, we have freely criticised his views at some points. But our high respect for him remained undiminished. Now that he is gone, we may mention, as a proof of his magnanimity and friendship, that in a long conference we had with him a few months ago over the points at which we differed from him and from the theology of our church, of which he was the ablest exponent, he uttered no words of denunciation or reproach. He showed indeed a large sympathy with any doubts or differences upon these grave questions of eschatology which he had reason to believe were candidly held and conscientiously avowed. And especially was he inclined to be charitable in a case, where, with these differences, the vital features of the gospel of salvation in Christ alone were steadfastly adhered to. We also sought his advice upon the grave and difficult question of our relation to the church of our love and life-long ministry. There are those who think that a minister of Christ in the Presbyterian Church is the pledged defender of a system, and that if he is led to differ from it at any serious point, he should at once lay down his office in it. Our own theory has been that a minister

in any denomination is first of all a minister of Christ, and that his fidelity to the Master and to His truth may sometimes require him to testify *within* his denomination to that which it is not yet prepared to receive. We believe that the Presbyterian Church is not to be regarded as a mere association, founded to perpetuate a fixed system. It is an attempt to realize the idea of a *body*, in which Christ has set pastors and teachers. And therefore there must be room in it for instruction and *growth* in divine knowledge. And therefore any one of its teachers who believes that he has been entrusted with truth for the benefit of his brethren, has no right to vacate his office before he has made his testimony within the church of which Christ has made him a minister. He has no right to consult his own ease or convenience, nor even that of his brethren, in such a matter. And to this view, we are free to say, Dr. Hodge offered no objection. He told us that he did not see any other course for us to pursue than to go on as we were doing. It would become evident in due time whether or not the church would receive our doctrine. This we believe to be the right course, and if so, we must be content to follow it to its issue without complaint. More than ever, since that conversation, we looked upon Dr. Hodge, however he might decline to accept our views, as a trusted counsellor and friend. And, in common with large numbers of his brethren in the Presbyterian church we feel that, in his death, we have sustained a personal loss.

We recall as an affecting incident of this conversation, the mention by Dr. Hodge of the fact that he found, after his father's death, written out upon the margin of his old Bible, near the close of his life, in his own trembling hand, his conviction that in the final summing up of the results of God's great plan of grace, it would appear that in the end the vast majority of mankind would be saved.

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Action of the House of Bishops.—Our readers are generally familiar with the action taken at the late General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal church looking toward Church Union. Both in the House of Deputies and among the

Bishops great interest was manifested in this subject, and the earnest desire was expressed that the Saviour's prayer "that they all may be one" may, in its deepest and truest sense, be speedily fulfilled.

This church deserves great honor that, before and beyond all other Christian bodies, it is deeply affected by the shame and weakness consequent upon these divisions, and is casting about for some way of putting an end to them. The resolutions adopted show a disposition to yield everything that church does not deem essential. And the Bishops "declare their desire and readiness, so soon as there shall be any authorized response to this Declaration, to enter into brotherly conference with all or any Christian bodies seeking the restoration of the organic unity of the church, with a view to the earnest study of the conditions under which so priceless a blessing might happily be brought to pass."

During the last few years there has been developed a wonderful growth of feeling in this direction. The movement is of God, and it cannot be repressed. We are deeply thankful for it. This movement in the Episcopal Church however has not yet gone down to the bottom of the matter. Their action, although praiseworthy, does not fully meet the case. It assumes that, in the most important matter in which that church differs from a large part of Christendom, the truth is on her side This may be so, but it is too soon to assert it. We have repeatedly urged that there must be a general movement in these Christian bodies in the direction of humiliation and confession of the sins of the whole body which have produced this divided state, before any of us can be sure where the truth lies. We may be sure that no fragment of the one body has the whole truth. We were greatly in hopes that the Bishops would issue a summons to Christians of every name to meet together on this common ground, and would provide for such gatherings suitable forms of confession and prayer.

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THE SYNOD OF PENNSYLVANIA.—*The Presbyterian* in reporting the late meeting of this body says, "One of the most

earnest and interesting discussions of the session arose upon a paper introduced by Dr. Pierson." This paper was directed against the New Theology, and especially its hypothesis of prolonged probation. "The wisdom of passing such a paper was the only thing questioned. It did not seem to be called for in the opinion of many." Hence it was referred to the Committee on Bills and Overtures and, as modified by them, it was almost unanimously adopted because "it was feared that refusal to pass it would be misconstrued and misrepresented." It reads mainly as follows:

"The Synod reasserts its "unshaken adherence to what we believe to be the teachings of the Word of God as explicitly set forth in the Westminster Standards; especially in relation to the Holy Scriptures, the atoning work of Christ, the application of redemption, and the final state of the impenitent wicked."

"We regard the current speculations about a probation after death as non-Scriptural and non-Christian, as unprofitable and productive of no certain good, while there is danger of their causing very great harm."

"As the best antidote for the evils resulting from such new departures we commend a profounder study of the Word of God, and a more earnest preaching of its plain truths, leaving to God Himself to vindicate His ways, and to eternity the fuller unfolding of the mysteries of His providence and grace."

This is mildly drawn. To say a thing is *non*-scriptural does not positively assert that it is *un*scriptural.

We publish this paper, not so much to show its weak points, as to call attention to the unsatisfactory way in which such church action is generally taken. Some earnest brother offers a paper appealing strongly to the denominational *esprit du corps*, and which swings the denominational whip over the assembly. Those who do not like to be thus driven, or who do not fully sympathize with the paper, begin the usual methods of evading or softening down the issue. The common resort is a Committee. The result is an emasculated paper which precisely pleases nobody, but which nobody dares oppose. This paper commits the members of that Synod to an "unshaken adherence" to such "explicit statements of the Standards" as this. "The punishments of

sin in the world to come are . . . most grievous and unspeakable torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire forever." If this and kindred statements had been fairly read, so that the Synod would have had clear understanding of what they were voting for, we doubt if even they would have been dragooned into such unanimity, Either the majority of them do not thoroughly believe these statements, or they are not honest enough to boldly preach what they believe, and that too in a matter where silence is most criminal.

That we are not mistaken as to the manner in which this action was taken is corroborated by a letter received from one of the delegates. He writes to us: "Doubtless you have seen the action of our Synod on progressive theology. The vote was not unanimous. There were a few noes. I thought best not to vote, as I am not satisfied that the final state of the impenitent wicked is just what is taught in our Standards. I should have liked an opportunity to ask Dr. Pierson just what he intended by the silence of Scripture in his paper. Does it not seem that a great deal is built upon that silence? Can any one say that no more is affirmed in the Confession than is found in the proof-texts subjoined? . . . Dr. P. acknowledged that the heart recoiled from the doctrine of eternal torment, that he would be glad to escape such conclusion as to the teachings of Scripture if possible. So there is something which he considers a part of the testimonies of the Lord, of which he cannot say, as the Psalmist, "They are the rejoicing of my heart." The clause in the paper adopted 'leaving to God himself to vindicate His ways, and to eternity the fuller unfoldings of the mysteries of His providence and grace' seems like a confession that these mysteries are not unfolded in His Word, and might justify the inquiry whether they are unfolded in the Word *to the extent that our Standards* assume to unfold them."

Such were the thoughts passing through the mind of at least one member of that Synod who was, nevertheless, dominated into silent acquiescence by the pervading tone of the leaders, who assumed from the outset that our system of doctrine is the system of Holy Scripture, and that no loyal Presbyterian will dare dispute it. How can such a body, in such a spirit, arrive at the *truth?*

The whole manner in which such measures are introduced and put through is a dishonor to the Holy Spirit. There is no opportunity given for further inquiry. There is no quiet waiting upon God to guide us more fully into the truth. There is the initial assumption that we have nothing more to learn about it. And that, in face of the fact that many men as good as we have not been led by the same Spirit to see these things as we do. Indeed, we know of no less likely places in which the Holy Spirit may be expected to give

light upon His Word than our ordinary ecclesiastical assemblies. We never yet were in one where the Holy Spirit, as the promised guide into all truth, was duly honored. We went to our own Synod of New Jersey this fall, with a desire also to offer a paper. There was absolutely no time when Synod could be found in any proper position to consider such a matter, and when it did not seem incongruous. An unusual press of routine and docketed business pre-occupied the time, and made it impossible to secure a proper hearing for anything so important. We wanted to introduce a paper something like the one we offered a year ago in the Presbytery. God grant that some brother, somewhere in the bounds of our church, may have the grace and boldness to call the church to its solemn duty by means of a paper something like this.

PROPOSED OVERTURE.—In view of the fact that the preaching in our pulpits no longer faithfully represents the teaching of the Westminster standards upon the great questions of human destiny, as defined in Chapter xxxiii, Section 2, Questions 29 and 89, Larger Catechism, and elsewhere, which teach that wicked men after death suffer the torments of hell in soul before the resurrection, and that, after resurrection, they are cast again into hell, "to be punished with unspeakable torments of both body and soul, with the devil and his angels, without intermission, in hell-fire forever," and which also teach that this punishment is inflicted definitely *for the sins of this life,*—And in view of the fact that the church is God's appointed witness to men, and of the immense importance which attaches to her testimony, in its bearing upon the good conscience of her ministers and the faith of their hearers, this Synod (or Presbytery) would respectfully petition the General Assembly to appoint a suitable committee, whose duty it shall be:

1. To consider whether the doctrine of our Confession concerning the final results of God's dealings with mankind, as set forth in the Standards referred to, is a complete and final expression of the teaching of Holy Scripture upon this subject.

2. To propose any alterations or explanations in the statements of our Standards upon this subject which may seem to them advisable, and to report any such proposed changes to the succeeding General Assembly for its suitable action in the premises.

INCONSISTENT.—The correspondent above quoted calls our attention to the fact that the last *Foreign Missionary* publishes, with strong commendatory words, a recent sermon by Archdeacon Farrar on Foreign Missions. As the first pages of that

journal condemn strongly the hope that there is any possible chance for the heathen after death, it is strange that it should give up its later pages to the sermon of one who has done more to propagate the wider hope than any other living man.

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A STRANGE VOICE.—We copy the following from the report in the Philadelphia *Times* of a recent sermon by one of the Presbyterian pastors in this city:

"I believe the creeds of our churches are too inclusive in their detail, too dogmatic, and I believe that many conscientious people stay away from church, because they cannot agree with the creeds created two hundred years ago." The speaker then referred to the Westminster Confession of Faith, describing it as framed by mortals only, and passed by a small majority of Parliament in the face of a great protest. "Shall those articles, devised in 1648, be the spectacles through which we of the nineteenth century shall read? We must agitate until we revise and reform these creeds."

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EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.—We select from letters received from time to time during the past year some words of approbation. We trust they will be regarded by our readers, not as savoring of personal compliment, but as signs that the Lord has a work for this magazine to do in its chosen field.

From a brother in Virginia, "I hail what you say upon these subjects as a means used by our Father for breaking up the prejudices which prevent His children from seeing the truth. I fully approve the tone and temper and ability with which you handle these themes."

From a Presbyterian pastor in this State. "The encouragement and reward attending your work may be delayed, but it will surely come, and, when reaped, it will more than compensate for the chilling opposition which it at present encounters. I fully appreciate and respect your position, that within the church to whose views we have subscribed we should testify to any new light that may come to us concerning them. May God abundantly bless and strengthen you."

From another Pennsylvania pastor. "I feel greatly indebted for the perusal of your writings, and believe that great good will come of them. It is certainly refreshing to read discussions carried on in such a spirit, in marked contrast with the intolerance and even fierceness apparent in some of the defences of the old dogmas. Although not yet prepared to accept all your views, I read everything you write with great interest, and

pray that you may be constantly guided by the Holy Spirit in all your studies and teachings."

From a Professor in a Presbyterian Theological Seminary. "I am obliged to you for your periodical. Although differing from it in many things I always read it with interest. With much of what you say about more freedom in our church I heartily agree. I believe we are greatly suffering from our rigid use of a confession which gives a whole system of Theology with much of the philosophy (medieval) on which it is largely based. We ought to have a more general Confession, embracing only the evangelical faith as accepted by all learned and earnestly Christian men. This would include your faith and mine, and many other honest variations of doctrinal sentiment."

From a prominent minister of the same church. "I have been delighted with your work and bid you God-speed."

From a clergyman in Boston. "I think that you have been doing a great and good word which will yet bear much fruit."

From a Ruling Elder in Philadelphia. "I have enjoyed your discussions exceedingly and think the spirit in which you write is admirable. I am not theologian enough to decide where the exact truth lies in the important questions you have treated, but I am in favor of the fullest freedom in their discussion."

From a lady in Washington. "Feeling great interest in all you have written, and having had my mind opened, and views of the future life very much enlarged by all I have read in the Magazine I send you the names of some of my friends to whom I wish it sent. I hope all who read your work will receive as much instruction and benefit as I have done."

From a lady in Newport, R. I. "I have read with deep interest a number of your magazine and wish to subscribe for it."

A minister writes from Dakota. "I have been reading your Magazine for nearly two years and have been much interested in its eschatology. All of your positions are not yet clear to my mind, but in your view of the great distinctive features of the divine government I agree with you, and especially in regard to the redemptive nature of resurrection. I admire the spirit of your paper. May the Holy Spirit guide you into further truth. What a privilege it is to feed the flock with the bread of heaven instead of the husks of error. I believe in the unity of the body of Christ, and as the day of her redemption draws near, that her unity will be more realized. May God bless you.